1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

E. MATURE AGE

I. *The Bantu Ideal.*

The married man is called "he who has his home" (a ni le kwakwe) in opposition to the single man (nkhwenda). But let us say at once that the kind of individual called bachelor does not abound amongst the Bantus. Only the utterly wretched, invalids, and the weak-minded, are deprived of legal marriage, which for the black man is and remains the one object in life. It is through his wife and children that he becomes somebody in society. This fact does not appear during the first year of wedlock, for the newly married woman must cook at the fireplace of her mother-in-law. She is hardly more than a servant during a whole year ; she does not possess her own pot ; and this must be so because she does not yet eat the mealies of her own garden, having ploughed her fields in her former domicile the previous year. Her husband eats with her. He is not yet a lord. But if he is rich, if he is the heir of an important man, he will not be long in buying a second and third wife.

These new marriages will be contracted like the first, but with less pomp. It may even happen that the feast is held in the husband's village, if he is middle-aged and is celebrating his fifth or sixth wedding.

For each new wife, he will build a hut. He has begun his village when building the house of his first wife, the great wife, (nsati lwe nkulu) as she is called, who will remain the principal one whatever may happen. While, without compass, he was drawing on the ground, with the marvellous instinct of the South African Native, the circumference of the circle on which the patched reed walls of his dwelling were to rise, while he was covering this circular wall with a conical roof, he was saying to himself : "I establish my home ; I inaugurate my village". During the following years, the aim of his life will be to complete little by little another wider circle... When he has bought his

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when he has brought his

595 second wife, he will build for her also a hut of the same type.
556 But this second hut, the third, and the fourth which may come
592 afterwards, will not be erected in a straight row like a street.
231 They will form an arc, which will be prolonged so as to constitute
361 first a semi-circle and then a complete circle, if a sufficient number
885 of buildings are added. This is the ideal of the black man, to

Phot. H. Grau

Ndjakandjaka, a headman of Spelonken, with his men.

become the lord and master of a complete circular village. Most of the men do not realise this ideal. Three or four huts, a wretched quarter of a circle is all that they attain to! Some, better armed for the struggle of life, or more favoured by circumstances, succeed in closing their circle. Their cattle, for which they have also built a circular enclosure right in the middle of the square of the village, multiply and are not carried off by peripneumonia and hæmaturia,

595 which, in this country, decimate so many herds! Every three
592 years, theirs wives bear children. If they are boys, it is an
361 honour; the village will not lack heirs, neither will the father
556 lack arms to help and to defend him! If they are girls, it means
842 wealth; oxen will come to the family! Their brothers will not lack wives, for the sisters will be sold to provide for the brothers. Meanwhile, the huts are erected, large and small, that of the head of the family being the largest, the *malao*, those of the boys the least well kept.

Let us consider a Ronga favoured by fate, as was Gidja, of the country of Libombo, near Rikatla. His village numbered not less than twenty-four huts, with beautiful shady trees behind; notice the enclosure for the cattle and for the goats on the central place, that for the pigs behind the houses... There are cocks and hens pecking about everywhere, dogs wandering around in search of something to steal, for they receive hardly any food; a crowd of youngsters leading the cattle, and everywhere the noise of the pestles crushing the daily mealies in the large mortars. He walks about proudly in his favoured enclosure, contemplating his prosperity with pleasure. Young men are ready to do the work he gives them to do. He will treat them with beer brewed by his wives. And often the people of the neighbouring villages will join his people for dances and games on the fine square, which is surrounded and enclosed on all sides by huts.

595 And, above all things, in the evening, each of his wives will
556 bring him the pot which she has cooked for him. This is the
574 essential matrimonial duty of the wife. Not one will fail in it. Gidja, the lord of six or seven pots of mealies seasoned with a sauce of monkey nuts, will feast and be satiated (shura) every day, and that means much, for the inner capacity of a Thonga is something wonderful.

He will become large and stout, and shining, which in South Africa is a sure sign of wealth and nobility. The stouter he gets the more will he be respected. But it can easily be imagined that he cannot alone empty all these pots over which he reigns supreme. He feasts his children, but others too come to pay him visits at the evening hour when they know him to be surround-

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556 ed by so many good things! Sycophants are not lacking. "Good
395 evening, son of so and so!" they say. "You are one of the
574 great men of the country." And in return for these and other compliments, the magnanimous Gidja shares his feast with his admirers!

Strangers are crossing the country and inquire where they can be received. "Go to Gidja" they are told. "A ni tshengwe, a fuya tshengwe" viz. "he is the possessor of a harem! He is not killed by famine! He has beer to drink every day! He can give food to poor people. Even then, some of it remains on the plate and is eaten by little boys and dogs in the square. There is always abundance there." And the travellers come and enter (khuleka) his village, after which they will tell in their homes the story of the magnificence of Gidja and extol his hospitality.

Thus the man who has succeeded in life becomes famous, his advice will carry weight in the discussions in which he takes part; he will perhaps be even more esteemed than the chief himself, though he does not enjoy the special prestige which the royal family owes to the blood running in its veins.

Conclusion: the greatness of an African is before all else a matter of pots, and the matter of pots is closely connected with polygamy!

885 During these years of mature age the evolution of a man is not
554 marked by special ceremonies. There is one custom however which is common to all, and which marks an advance in their social position. It is that of fixing the wax ring.

II. *Fixing the wax ring.*

885 Amongst the South Africans, the crown is not the appanage of
177 royalty. All men having reached mature age have the right to
554 adorn themselves with it. It is true, it is not a diadem of precious
301 stones, but a large ring of wax. This custom seems to have a Zulu origin. The Ba-Sutho do not know it and the Ba-Thonga, who all practise it, have taken it from the conquering tribe which owes its fortune to the famous Chaka. This habit has spread all

765 to the bush. There they have sexual relations in the ritual
783 fashion, viz. s. n. i. (See Annotatio 2)[1]. They come back by
833 separate ways. The woman has taken with her a pot full of water ; she goes straight with it to a certain spot, which has been decided upon during the discussion, either in front of the main entrance of the village or at the door of the hut. There she washes her hands which contain "their impurity" (thyaka ra bona). All the other couples do the same, each woman coming in her turn to cleanse her impurity at the same place. When this is over, the men also come to this spot and stamp on the ground. Sticks belonging to absent young men, or a piece of clothing of a girl who happens to be away from home, are also brought to this spot and are purified. The same is done to the straps of the ntehe of the infant, as we have seen, but he is not allowed to be present, as it might cause his death. When the purifying act is finished in all its phases, men and women go to the river and bathe; the men higher up, the women lower down. (Annotatio 6)[2].

Such is the *hlamba ndjaka* amongst the Thongas of the North, when the life of the village has been deeply affected by the death of an important member of the community. The rite is performed with less publicity when a child dies. Then the act takes place, not outside, in the bush, but inside the hut, as it is a private mourning. Should the husband have had regular intercourse with his wife before this purification has been carried out, it is a very great sin. His wife will go and confess their fault to one of the women of the village. This woman will tell it to her husband's mother, who will have to find the remedy. The guilty husband must not eat at all... If he eats, he will have eaten the contamination of death (u mitile rifu). The *hlamba ndjaka* of the whole village will have to take place. (Annotatio 7)[1].

765 The hlamba ndjaka concerns first of all the inhabitants of the
783 mortuary village, but it sometimes extends to the parents of the
595 women of that village, who dwell, of course, in other places. If the first wife of a man dies, his second wife, the one with whom the widower has begun the purifying operation at home, will have to go to her own parents *to give them water* (ku ha mati), as they say, viz. to cleanse them. She takes with her in a pot a portion of the

1 [See p. 516 in these categories or IN 116--Analyst]
2 [See p. 577 in these categories or IN 116--Analyst]

765 783 345 water used for the purification, arriving early in the morning in the neighbourhood of the paternal kraal, and calls her mother. Then she washes her hands on the spot and all her relatives will come and stamp on the ground. This is considered a great duty which a married daughter ought never to forget, otherwise she is said to have turned her back on her parents (a ba fularelile). They will be angry with her and not visit her for at least a year (Annotatio 8).[1] The woman who has done this is called "the one who has cleansed the inheritance" (muhlantsi wa ndjaka). She has taken upon her the contamination, but she will not suffer from it, because she belongs to another family, and the contamination of death is dangerous more especially to the people who are of the same blood as the deceased. This woman will assuredly be praised and even rewarded with two hoes. When she goes to her relatives "to give them water," she will make a present of these two hoes to her father, who will say: "All right! You have cleansed those people." Then she will have the right of adorning herself with the bracelets of her deceased co-wife! Old women no longer having sexual intercourse are allowed to appropriate the old clothing of a deceased woman.

765 783 833 The Ba-Ronga do not know the expression hlamba ndjaka. They have a corresponding rite, performed in the same manner, which they call *lahla khombo*. *Khombo* means misfortune, *lahla* to throw away. It is the medicine of death (muri wa lifu), said Magingi, an old heathen of Rikatla. It is also said "to heal the mourning" (daha nkosi). This rite more especially concerns the grave-diggers. The one who carried the legs of the deceased begins. The sexual relations take place very early in the morning. When his wife comes back, she washes her hands at the door of her hut, and all the inhabitants of the village come and stamp on the wet place; then they enter the hut. The doctor comes and prepares a steam bath for the man. Then the second grave-digger performs his *lahla khombo*, and the same gathering of all the members of the community takes place before his hut. Afterwards the village is pure. But if the grave-diggers are cleansed, the widows are not yet purified, and we shall see that, for them, the *lahla hkombo* will last much longer.

1 [See p. 677 In these categories or in 116.-Amherst]

595 lady of the hut. The first wife is certainly the most respected; she is called the "great one" (nsati lwe' nkulu); those who are taken in marriage afterwards being the "little wives." She is the true wife and acts as such in some old rites, those which accompany widowhood and the foundation of the village, as we shall see.

When speaking of divorce, we shall notice the principal causes of quarrel between married people and how they are dealt with.

As regards conjugal relations, I have explained them as fully as was possible to me in the paper already quoted (*Revue d'ethnologie et de sociologie*, Paris. Ernest Leroux, 1910, p. 143-151). This paper however being now very difficult to obtain, I am obliged to treat this subject here also, as it is of paramount importance. No one could pretend to know the life of an African tribe if he were ignorant of these facts. I do not give them to satisfy mere curiosity, but because they play an immense part in the social life of the Bantus and reveal to us some of their most characteristic physiological ideas.

833 It is generally asserted that Bantus, especially the men, have the sexual instinct very strongly developed. This is true to a certain extent. Polygamy has increased it enormously. In a royal kraal like that of Gungunyana, the excesses were awful. (See Annotatio 14). But even amongst monogamists the indulgence in sexual relations is sometimes very great. We often heard women pounding their mealies in the middle of the night in order to escape from the assiduities of their husbands. However this statement must not be exaggerated. Amongst Bantus as amongst other races there are great differences between individuals in this domain and I have already pointed to the fact that hundreds, and even thousands of young and grown up men can remain continent for months and years in the Institutions and the Compounds of South Africa.

The fact that heathens also submit themselves readily to the prohibition of sexual intercourse during more or less protracted periods for the welfare of the community shows that even in the primitive state Bantus are capable of exercising control over themselves in that domain.

1[See p. 519 in those categories or in 16--Analyst]

789 761 "*ringela bowumba*," from the verb ringa, to try ; it is the attempt to bring some influence to bear on the misfortune of the bereaved mother.)

9) Adultery.

837 395 Amongst the Thongas *true* adultery for a *man*, married or unmarried (bumbuye), consists in committing sin with a married woman. Should he have relations with a girl, it leads to no consequences at all. Nobody will blame him, if the girl does not conceive. Should she have a child, he will only be forced to marry her ; she will become his second wife. His first wife will not at all resent his bad conduct. Sometimes she will herself get him the girl he wants. There is nothing in her heart like the jealous dignity of a European spouse! She will keep all her capacity for jealousy (bukwele) for the time when the second wife comes to the village, and shares with her the affection of their common husband! Adultery with an unmarried woman is nothing more than "gangisa."

837 684 692 But should a man have abducted a *married woman*, a woman who has a master (nwinyi), who has been paid for, then the matter becomes very serious. The husband is very skilful at discovering her misdoing. As soon as he begins to have doubts about the fidelity of his wife, he chooses a friend and asks him to watch her. She is very cunning, her lover also ; but the friend is on the watch and some time perhaps, catches them in the bush, when she goes to gather fuel, or near the pool, where she draws her water. He comes back to the husband and informs him that he has caught them in the very act. Then the husband tells his wife that proof has been obtained and that she had better go at once to her lover and take something from his hut ; she obeys, and comes back with his blanket or any other object. This is "la pièce à conviction." The husband goes with it to the counsellor who is in charge of his village ; together they apply to the chief. The chief sends the counsellor who is responsible for the village of the lover to summon him. The confrontation takes place and the story of the case is investigated.

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783 765 washed in the pool and which she will wear again for two days (1).

b) *The following days of the Great Mourning.* Without delay a new hut, a small provisional hut, is built in front of the mortuary one. Here the great wife will stay during the whole of her widowhood; the space between this and the old hut is more or less taboo and most of the possessions of the deceased are placed there, under the roof near the door on the outside. (See illustration p. 159.)

The other widows do not leave their huts, but they participate in the other purifying acts, the vapour baths and the general sprinkling of the fifth day. As regards the vapour baths, however, the first wife is associated with the grave-diggers, viz. she must be exposed to the strongest medicinal smoke, while the inferior wives are cleansed with weaker drugs. They all put on the *malopa* and eat with spoons during the whole year of widowhood.

587 595 768 604 c) *Provisional decision regarding the fate of the widows.* A few days after the Great Mourning, a fresh gathering takes place, not in connection with the defilement of death, which is now provisionally cleansed, but *to settle provisionally the fate of the widows.* The sisters of the deceased have to play a special part in this gathering. They will lead the discussion with the widows about their new husbands. It is indeed a happy custom to let women decide on the subject. Not that they have unrestricted power in the matter. The law has provided a certain rule for the distribution and this is seldom departed from. However, some liberty is allowed in its application, and modifications can better be made if proposed by female intermediaries. Should the husband possess a harem (tshengwe), that is at least five wives, they will most likely be given to the following heirs. The great wife, being "the pole of the

575 783 765 (1) *Widowers* also form a similar society and undergo the same rites; but just as it was only the great wife who was subject to these laws, to the exclusion of the little wives, so it is only when he has lost his first wife that a man is initiated into the widowers' society. After having buried her (he holds her head) he goes to the pool, washes himself, and another widower comes and makes the incision in him in the inguinal region. Then he throws aways his *shifado* (Annotatio 1.) and also carries out the same crossing of the hut in tears. These three acts constitute the actual widower's mourning; the vapour baths and *fahla khombo* are part of his purification as being the principal grave-digger.

1[See category 11c --Analyst]

787 village," must remain in it and belongs to the younger brother (1)
595 who becomes the master of the kraal. The second goes to the
428 second brother, the third to the third, the fourth to the *ntukulu*,
768 viz. to the son of the sister of the deceased. The fifth will then
604 become the wife of one of the sons of the deceased. This may appear shocking, and is really shocking even to the ideas of the Natives ; but let it be remembered that she is the youngest of all ; she was taken when the father was already old, and the first son is perhaps older than she. As regards the elder wives, the first and second especially, no one would think of keeping them for the son! Incestuous relations are very rare amongst the [825] Ba-Ronga. Even in this case, the feelings of both parties are more or less respected. The men advise the son to begin to play with the young widow, to ask her jocularly for tobacco, and he gradually accustoms himself to consider her no longer as a mother (mamana) but as a wife (nsati).

587 Of course the general rule is apt to be very much altered
595 according to circumstances. Should the deceased be the youngest
428 of the family, his elder brother may inherit the first wife. But
768 this is not the regular procedure.

The distribution having thus been decided on, the sisters of the deceased call the widows and say to them : "You so and so, you shall give food to so and so (phamela manyana)." But then the struggle begins. One of the widows, being old, may altogether refuse to have anything to do with any of her brothers-in-law. She may say : "I am taking my young son as a husband" which means : I do not want to be the wife of anybody. Or she will say : "I choose the big tree of the village where my late husband has built his hut." This answer may mean two things. Either : I do not leave this kraal and I will stay here without a husband ; or, on the contrary : I consent to be the wife of the man who becomes the headman of the village, viz. the eldest of the younger brothers. Another will say : "I love my *ntukulu* so and so." Should, however, the first wife desire to go to a man who does not

(1) Amongst the Ba-Ronga, an elder brother of the deceased cannot inherit a widow. It is taboo. He is a father to her, not a husband. He sometimes takes the lead in the discussion, having no personal interest in the matter. (See Part II).

587 393 728 768

live in the village, the family council will certainly object strongly to her wish, as her departure would mean that the village would cease to exist. But in the case of the younger widows it is quite possible that an exception to the ordinary law would be allowed if they insisted upon choosing another husband (1).

After all, this is but a preliminary consultation, and the men who are rejoicing at the idea of getting new wives will perhaps be badly deceived later on, as we shall see. However the man provisionally chosen as the future husband of a widow, will at once pay visits to her, "march to her" (ku mu fambela), according to the technical expression.

765 783 833

d) *The casting away of misfortune.* But before any new and happy life can begin for the widows, they have still to go through a very hard trial. They must perform the *lahla khombo*, the throwing away of the malediction of death, and this is much more difficult for them than for the grave-diggers or the other members of the village. The main point in this strange act of purification is this ; before a widow can become the wife of her new husband, she must have sexual intercourse with another man whom she deceives. Should she succeed in freeing herself from him so that the act keeps its ritual character, s. n. i. (see Annotatio 2)[1], this man will take on himself the malediction of death, and she will be purified. On the contrary, should the man accomplish the whole act, the widow has failed and will return home with shame and in despair! Here is a description of this sad expedition of the widows. It takes place a few days after the gathering just described. The men of the village send the widows away, telling them : "Go and scatter (hangalasa) the malediction through the country and get rid of it before some other misfortune happens to us."

(1) What would happen should the widow choose a husband outside her husband's family? To the mind of a heathen woman the idea would never occur. But suppose a Christian widow, having only married sisters, refuses to become their wife, her conscience forbidding her to contract a polygamic union. Her case would be very hard indeed, as I do not think her wish would be taken into consideration by heathen relatives. It would have to be brought before the White magistrate, who would probably try to help the widow. I think that, even if the woman consented to submit such family matters to the European court, she would have to give the labola or her children back to her brothers-in-law, and that might be an impossibility for her. It would be interesting to know how Native Commissioners proceed in such cases.

1[See p. 516 in these categories or in IIC -- Analyst]

764 inhabitants of the kraal. One of them, the saluter (mulom), goes to meet them and offers them a shilling. They keep silence. He tells them the news of the village. They do not answer. He leaves them and comes a second time with a fresh present. Then they consent to tell the news of their home, but they do not enter the village. The same man returns to them a third time with £ 1 ; they refuse to accept it. He adds 10/. (£ 1.10 is considered the normal sum to be paid as a kind of fine by the widower to the parents of the deceased.) They refuse again : this is an insult! Happily the *ntukulu* is there ; he will act as mediator between the two families. The visitors summoned him on their arrival and he has been sitting with them the whole time ; is he not the son of their sister ? But before he went to them, his father has given him his instructions : "Tell them that I have not eaten your mother." The *ntukulu*, as we shall see, is very free with his maternal uncles. He has the right of teasing them, even insulting them. Seeing that they do not accept the money, he stands and gives vent to his grief, throws sand at them, tries to drive them away, weeps. "No! Father has not killed mother! He is not a wizard! She died a natural death!" They see his tears, and then consent to enter the village.

764 In front of the mortuary hut, all the belongings of the deceased 768 wife have been piled up, together with the straw crown of the hut : her pots, plates, baskets, spoons, mortars, etc. The brothers break everything. Should there be any new implements amongst them, they will perhaps give them to their nieces. Then they [578] lift up the roof of the hut and throw it into the bush. They pick all the plaster from the walls and throw it away where they threw the roof. The sacrifice is then accomplished amidst the ruins of the destroyed hut. Whilst it is being prepared, the women of both families insult each other. The female relatives of the deceased say to the women of the village : "You have killed her because she was a splinter in your eyes" (shilabi). The others answer : "Have you seen us kill her ? Perhaps people do not die with you ?" The *bukwele*, the special jealousy which almost always exists between co-wives, explains how it is possible for them to address such amenities to each other. But the victim is

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764 prepared, all the limbs cut off, the portion of the gods set apart.
782 The elder brother of the deceased woman prays in these words:
768 "My sister, go in peace, be not angry; because we love you, we
595 have come to mourn you to-day. Do not say we have not mourned you. Go to so and so (father, grandfather, etc.), call them here, give us good sleep and good health, etc." The batukulu appropriate the offering and the mourning ends in laughter, dancing and drinking. The neighbours come and take part in the rejoicings.

When they return home, the mourners spend all the mahloko money in buying wine. They sometimes become quite intoxicated. Afterwards both families begin to visit each other again.
764 This custom of the mahloko fine is so strong that converts
768 still adhere to it. But they usually send the money to the wife's family when informing them of the death, and no other ceremony is performed.

In the Northern clans the mahloko are also paid, but it seems that the family of the widower considers that it has the right to claim the repayment of the whole lobolo, when the deceased wife has left no child to compensate for the loss. In Nondwane, though we are still in Ronga territory, when the woman dies
765 shortly after marriage the lobolo must be repaid. Further north
782 the procedure is as follows: the deceased woman is buried by her husband according to the ordinary rules; one year elapses and a special feast is celebrated, similar to the "beer of mourning" (page 164), in the village of the wife's parents, where both families gather together and provide the necessary victims. It commences with a sacrifice in which the father of the deceased wife squeezes the *psanyi* of the goat on to those present, all the time insulting the gods who have killed his child and made trouble between the two families. He ends with words addressed to the widower's relations: "I cleanse you from your misfortune." The widower's father does the same thing, insulting also his own gods, and every one rubs his body with the green liquid squeezed from the *psanyi*. Then prayer for new blessings is offered and the sacrifice is made, as
765 customary, and the actual discussion as to claims takes place. Each family takes possession of a hut, the widower's family assembling

601 reciprocal, means brothers as well as sisters. If he wishes to specify, he adds to makwabu : "of the assagai," or "of the basket." It is never employed except when united with the possessive pronoun : *makweru* means my brother, *makwenu* your brother, *makwabu*, his brother or sister. The elder brother is called *nhondjwa* (plur. tinhondjwa). The nhondjwa is also called *hosi* (plur. tihosi) chief. The hierarchy of age is very strictly observed amongst the Thongas. The elder brother is treated with great respect and gives orders to his younger brothers with almost the same authority as the father. It must be noticed also that the position of elder brother is not only a matter of age, but, in the polygamic family, all the children of a first wife, or of the first house, are *tihosi* to the children of secondary or posterior wives or houses, though they may have been born after them. They take precedence of them. Amongst girls, an elder sister is often called *mamana*, mother, whilst an elder brother is never a tatana (father) but a hosi (chief).

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601 The term *makwabu* is applied to all my first and second cousins who have the same paternal grandfather, or great-grandfather, as I have. Cousins on my mother's side are also bamakwabu, some of them at least, those who are my maternal aunt's children. But cousins on the father's side are more fully bamakwabu than those on the mother's side : Muhambi is more so to Hlangabeza than to Mahlobo, because the two former belong to the same shibongo, family name ; they are men of the Makaneta clan and Muhambi could therefore inherit Hlangabeza's wives ; Muhambi and Mahlobo are not of the same clan, and could not inherit from each other. From this fact we begin to see that the laws of inheritance, and especially the laws of the distribution of the widows amongst the family which has bought them, are closely connected with the system of relationship.

601 4/28 605

601 The man who has married my wife's sister is also a makwabu to me, a nhondjwa if he has married her elder sister (Phayindi to Mboza), a ndjisana if the younger (Magwazizen to Mboza). The brothers of Phayindi and Magwazizen are also called brothers by Mboza.

There is a special term in the Northern clans to indicate the

There is a special term in the Northern clans to indicate the relationship of two men who have married two sisters born of the same mother. They are called : bamakwabu ba shinauma, an expression which is the simplification of the following sentence : shi na wuñwe mamana, i. e. there is only one mother. This term seems to have been borrowed from the Pedis.

601 177

2) Relatives on the mother's side.

601 593 Tobane II calls Mishikombo *mamana*, mother. She is his true mamana and this relation is very deep and tender, combining respect and love. Love however generally exceeds respect. The proper word for tenderness is *timpsalu*, which comes from *psala*, to beget, and the mother is often called *mpsele* (a term which is applied also to the female of all animals). It is the word which answers best to the feelings of a mother for her children. She is generally weak with them and is often accused by the father of spoiling them.

601 604 The mother's sisters are *bamamana* in the second degree, because, if the true mother dies, one of them will probably take care of the children. Their husbands are *batatana* : Phayindi is tatana to Madonge and Muhambi. He calls them *bana*, children. Mboza is also a tatana to Mahlobo and Mathamba, being a makwabu, brother of their father, owing to the fact that he and Phayindi have married sisters.

601 578 595 All the co-wives are also *bamamana*, mothers by polygamy, (Ñwashihoni and Mishihari to Tobane). They are *bamamana ba shitshengwe*, harem mothers. I respect them but they are further from me than my mother's sisters. A more familiar term for mother, corresponding to roro, father, is *ñwa*, a word always used with the possessive pronoun and only in the second and third person : ñwaku, your mother, ñwakwe, his mother. Ñwaku is employed in certain insults and oaths, and is to be avoided as being vituperative.

601 Many other women are mamana : the wife of my paternal uncle (Magugu for Muhambi), though I can inherit her in certain cases ; the daughter of my maternal uncle, because she is the

607 so far as to sleep in the hut of my great mukonwana together with
833 me (p. 242). Nevertheless sexual relations are not allowed.
595 Should a man commit this sin, and should his sister-in-law
582 become pregnant, he will have to pay a fine, or rather he will go to his father-in-law and say : (Viguet) "Ndi dlele ku dya"-"I have killed in order to eat" which means : I have committed a bad action but with the intention of repairing my wrong by marrying the girl. He brings five hoes when he makes the announcement and will remit the remainder of the lobolo later on. A younger sister when married to the same husband as the elder, is called *nhlampsa* of the latter. This term comes probably from hlampsa, to wash, because she washes the dishes of her sister and works more or less as her servant.

607 The right of marrying one's wife's sisters is by no means an
582 obligation. I am not in any way forced to do so, if I do not like
595 them. Most probably, even if I wished to marry them all, I should not have enough oxen to "lobola" them all. On the other hand, the bakoñwana are not obliged to give them to me. If I am not a good husband to my wife, if she complains that I illtreat her, her parents will not consent to receive my oxen for her sisters. Should my tinamu marry other men, of course the peculiar bulamu relations will cease. I can no longer allow myself the intimacy I previously had with them. But if they have children by these men, they will call me tatana and I shall call them bana, because I might have been their father, having a prior right of marrying their mothers.

607 My wife's elder sisters are not tinamu to me ; they are
582 bakoñwana. Why so ? Because when I married my wife, her elder sisters were already married, according to the law that an elder sister must always marry before the younger. A father would never consent to give away the younger before the elder. Therefore I have never had the opportunity of playing with my wife's elder sisters and considering them as possible wives.

607 By extension the term namu is also applied to my wife's
595 younger brothers. They are bakoñwana, in fact (p. 238). Their daughters are my potential wives. However, the relations I have with them are easier than with the elder brothers and

607 with the father of my wife, as these are her natural protectors.
835 In this first category is included the daughter of my wife's
595 brother (Shaputa versus Mboza). With her the relations are perhaps even more free than with my wife's younger sisters. I call her *nsati*. The intimacy is so great that I can hold her breasts (tamele mabele). I can do so even in the presence of my wife, who is her paternal aunt. She will be pleased to see that I am disposed to avail myself of my right to marry her, because her niece will thus become her nhlampsa, she will hlampsela rarana, i. e. become a second wife by the side of her father's sister. But I dare not take such a liberty with the girl if her father is on the spot and sees me. I probably do not possess the oxen to pay for her, and the father looks chiefly to the oxen.

As already pointed out, all the girls belonging to my bakoñwana are in the same position towards me. I can marry them all... if I am rich enough to "lobola" them. The grand-daughter of my wife's brother is a namu, a nsati. She will probably be a baby whilst I am a grown-up man. Never mind! If I meet her, a little girl on her mother's back, I go and take her in my arms, and
602 say to her: "Good morning, my wife!" As regards my wife's
607 cousins, those whose father is a brother of my wife's father and
835 who bear the same family name as my wife, they are also tinamu,
595 but here a distinction must be made. Should the father of one of these girls be younger than my wife's father, I can marry her; but should he be older I must not do so. Why is this? Because the girl, belonging to an elder branch of my wife's family, takes precedence of my wife; she is her "hosi", her chief. On the other hand my wife, being my first wife, is the mistress of the house; this cousin of hers ought therefore to obey her. But she is her chief! That would not be right. The natural family relations would be disturbed.. Such a union is not taboo (a psi yili) but it must be avoided.

835 The *second category of tinamu* includes those women whom I
595 might marry, not on account of the prior right of a group to the
607 women of another group, but because I might *inherit them*. They are the wives of my elder brothers. If their husbands die, I am their legal heir. Relations with them are easy. We joke together, but there is more reserve towards these tinamu than towards those

835 of the first category. Sexual intercourse with them is a great taboo,
595 and a man daring to commit such a sin would be likened to a
607 wizard: he has killed his brother. This is the sin called matlulana (App. VI). My younger brother's wives are not tinamu; we call each other ñwingi. I do not inherit them except in extraordinary cases when the deceased has no brother younger than himself.

602 There is still a *third kind of bulamu*. I also call tinamu the
835 cousins of my wife who are the daughters of my wife's mother's
582 sisters. These girls do not belong to my wife's clan; they bear the family name of their father. Therefore I have no right to inherit them: "A hi delani ndjaka," i. e. "we do not inherit from each other." The relations with these tinamu are agreeable, but there is no hope of marriage between us.

2) Relations on the Husband's side.

607 So far we have considered the relation of Mboza with his wife's family. But what about Nsabula and her position towards her husband's relatives? Nsabula calls Masuluke and Nsengamuñwe *ñwingi*, and the term is reciprocal. It implies great respect. As we saw, the young bride must work a whole year for her mother-in-law. The same respect is shown by Nsabula to Djan, Sam, Fos, her husband's elder brothers. They are also *ñwingi* to each other. "Should I send her to call Djan," says Mboza, "she will kneel down before him and say: 'My father! Mboza calls you!' or: 'Ñwamasuluke (Masuluke's son), you are wanted with us." She will not dare to address him by name. This extraordinary respect is reciprocal. Djan will consider Nsabula as his inferior, but he will never play with her. On the other hand, Komatane, Mboza's younger brother, is only a *namu* to Nsabula. Both will joke together and even occasionally smear each other with ashes. So will Sam, Fos, Mboza and Komatane with Mihlakaza, the wife of their elder brother. Thus we note
607 this law: a woman will generally respect the elder brothers of her
835 husband (beñgi), and hold very free intercourse with his younger
595 brothers (tinamu), and vice-versa. A man will keep away from

607 his younger brother's wives (bengi) and play with those of his elder
835 brothers (tinamu). Why tis here this difference ? Because, as
we saw, the wife of an elder brother is a possible wife for all
343 his younger brothers, as they have the right of inheriting
512 her, should this man die. On the contrary, an elder brother inherits his younger brother's wife only under quite exceptional circumstances. One does not marry a ñwingi! This would be an insult to one's wife. Nsabula would leave Mboza if Mboza were to marry Magugu, Komatane's wife, because they have been accustomed to call each other ñwingi.

607 To a wife, her husband's elder sister is also a ñwingi (Ndjibari to Nsabula). The husband's younger sister is a namu or *nhombe*, and two tinhombe have very free relations, just as in the case of the tinamu. This freedom exists between female tinamu as well as between tinamu of different sexes.

606 There is a final term to be mentioned : *bakhoti* or *bakhoti-kulobye*, in Ronga, *basevele* in Djonga, a reciprocal term by which the parents of a husband and wife call each other.

593 How far is a woman incorporated in her husband's family ?
769 She belongs to it till her death, provided the lobolo oxen have been paid, but she does not accept the ancestor-gods of her parents-in-law as being her gods. She keeps her own gods, and prayers are frequently addressed to them by her father or by her brothers in favour of her children. In this respect Thongas differ widely from the old Aryan peoples, where a woman had to adopt the religion of her husband's clan when she married.

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606 Before leaving the subject of relations with parents-in-law, and in order to show to what extent the uneasiness and fear which characterises them are carried, I will briefly mention the taboos of the bukoñwana, which play such a great part in Bantu family life. Let me say that most of these taboos (psiyilayilana, small prohibitions), are not so severe as those connected with sexual relations, disease and death. It is not believed that a breach of

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

582 and whom he calls spouses, because he would be welcomed if he
607 were able to lobola them. They are his *tinamu* or *tinhlampsa*, viz., his wife's younger sisters or the daughters of his wife's brother. These marriages are considered as peculiarly appropriate. This does not however constitute an absolute right for the man. Should he not prove a good husband, his parents-in-law will not let him have their other daughters (p. 240).

582 As regards marriage with the wife's brother's daughter, who is the
607 nhlampsa proper, there are different possibilities to be considered.
595 It may very well happen that a man's wife, wishing to have a young girl to help her in her domestic work, approaches her brother and asks him to lend her his daughter, the woman's niece, to stay in her village for this purpose. He consents, and she grows up there. Later on however the girl's parents say to their sister : If your husband has oxen, he may take her as a wife. She returns home and discusses the matter with her husband. Should the latter be agreed, he will send his wife with £1.10.—to make a proposal to the girl's parents, and he will take the girl at once without much ceremony. The remainder of the lobolo will perhaps be paid afterwards. If a son wants to marry and has no means of buying his wife, then the girl's parents will say to their sister: "Please remind your husband that he has not yet given the oxen." But they will not urge this too strongly as it is their sister who arranged the marriage in order to secure help for herself. On the contrary should the husband have taken the initiative, and sent his wife to ask her parents to give him the girl because he wanted her, then the lobolo oxen will be claimed at once, or at any rate the bakoñwana will be in a position to insist on a speedy remittance of the bride-price. But as my informant says : "Psi ya hi bhanu," i. e. "it goes according to the people." It depends on their character.

586 However there is a reason which militates against such
582 marriages. If I quarrel with my first wife, who may have a
607 particularly difficult character, and she goes home, her younger
595 sisters or nieces, who are her tinhlampsa, will certainly follow her, and I shall remain quite alone without a single dish to eat in the evening. Should the quarrel end in a divorce, I shall lose all my

586 wives at once. The custom of marrying a wife's tinhlampsa is
582 approved of; it is however not very frequently observed in Thonga
607 families at the present time.
545 Other women to whom a man has a special right are his relatives on the mother's side, as we have seen; to take a wife from the family in which the father found the mother is recommended and approved of as long as she is not too near a relative.

2) The right of inheritance.

587 The second class of cases does not concern unmarried women
835 whom I mean to lobola, but widows whom I may inherit after
768 the death of their husband. Those whom I may eventually inherit
595 are generally called by me *namu* or *nsati*, and I have very free
582 relations with them, but as already pointed out this liberty never goes so far as to allow of sexual intercourse (p. 247). "Ndi nga da," viz. "I can eat, inherit by prior right" *my elder brother's widow*: she is my regular legacy. As regards my younger brother's widow, I can only marry her if she is old and no longer able to bear children. But if she is still a childbearing woman, to take her is very much against the feelings of the tribe. The reason of the prohibition is this, says Viguet: suppose that this widow of my younger brother already has children. I take her, and have a child by her. The child takes precedence of the first children of its mother: he is their *hosi*, because I, myself, the father, am the elder brother of the deceased. On the other hand, he is *ndjisana* of his other brothers, because he was born after them by the same mother. This is impossible; it runs counter to the most elementary notions of the family. In exceptional cases, however, when no one else can claim my younger brother's widow, I may take her.

587 Next to my true tinamu comes *the widow of my maternal uncle*.
768 If he had many, one might be alloted to me in the distribution.
595 But of course, in this as in all other cases of inherited women, the
582 children born of our union would belong to the family who paid the lobolo, and not to me. I have, in a sense, only the usufruct of the property. She will till the fields for me and serve me with

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587 my daily plate of porridge, but she is not really mine. She is given
768 (nyika) to me by favour, and only under specified conditions.
595 I can also inherit *bakokwana*, the widow of my malume's father
582 (not my true grandmother, of course, but her co-wife), the widow of my father's brothers.

Muhambi can inherit Magugu, *the widow of his cousin* Hlangabeza. This cousin is a brother (makwabu) and the two fathers are brothers. But he could not inherit Debeza, wife of Phusa. Why so? Because Phusa, being a cousin by the father's sister, belongs to another *shibongo*, the shibongo of his own father Muki and not to that of his mother. Should Muhambi lay claim to Debeza, the men of Mashabane (the name of Phusa's clan) would say : "We are opposed to it, because your doing so would in fact mean that you *eat two herds*. You have eaten one herd when we bought Ndjibari from your people. Ndjibari has had two children ; we have sold her daughter Ñwashidjasa to lobola Debeza for Phusa. The oxen were ours. If Phusa dies, Debeza belongs to us and not to you." So Muhambi can inherit the widow of his cousin, the son of his paternal uncle, but not the widow of his cousin, the son of his paternal aunt.

A man can inherit also *one of his father's wives*, as we have seen (page 203), but only under certain circumstances. The dlaya shilongo is never performed in the case of inherited women.

A rule on which Viguet insisted, but which is disappearing, is this : women, when their husband had no younger brothers, must be inherited by *batukulu* and not by *bana ;* batukulu, i. e. either true grandsons, sons of the son, or uterine nephews, sons of the sister of the deceased. The reasons for this law are : 1) Bana, sons, would take liberties with their father's wives and make balamo of them, if they could inherit them regularly. This would spoil the life of the village. 2) If I, being ñwana, a son, inherit my father's wife and have a child by her, this child is ñwana, a son, to me. On the other hand, this inherited woman may have had children by my father, and they are my brothers. So, one of this woman's children is my son, the other my brother ! "A beleki tinshaka timbiri." — "She has had children of two generations!" This must not be.

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I. *Original promiscuity.*

582 As regards the idea that promiscuity prevailed originally—a supposition which is combated by some scientists (see W. H. R. Rivers, "On the origin of the classificatory system of relationship," Anthropological Essays), I see no trace of it amongst the Thongas. Amongst the Pedis, there is one day when free intercourse is allowed all through the clans ; it is the closing day of the second circumcision school. But this custom can be explained on a totally different basis.

II. *Group marriage.*

178, 582, 595, 837 As regards *group marriage*, we may see a remnant of the system in the fact that a man has a special preferential right to certain women of his wife's family, the tinamu. His son will also consider it peculiarly appropriate to take a wife from his mother's clan, the one into which his father married.

The tinamu custom might be explained in that way. There is however a very marked difference between the group-marriage system and the Thonga family law. Amongst Australian aborigenes, whilst a man of a group has the right of marrying all the women of the other group, a woman of the other group has the same right to marry all the men of the first. Amongst the Thongas it is absolutely taboo for a married woman to have relations with anybody except her own husband. Polygamy exists and is approved of, but polyandry is strongly censured and considered a disgusting custom. The main reason for this is no doubt the *matlulana* superstition, which bears all the character of a very ancient idea in the Thonga system. The story of P. K. which I relate in Appendix IV, will show how deeply the sin of polyandry is felt (1).

(1) It is true that the Ba-Pedi who are neighbours of the Thongas, have a kind of polyandry (See page 99). But this has nothing to do with group marriage, and the wives of a rich man whom he allows to have intercourse with other men, choose their lovers as they like and not according to a law of preferential right binding two groups.

582 595 835 Though laying much stress on this very important difference we must notice, nevertheless, that there is a certain correspondence between the rights of men and women in this respect. A man has a preferential right to his wife's younger sisters, and to the daughters of his wife's brothers, be these men younger or older than his wife. He is a potential husband for all these tinamu. It results from this fact, that, as regards a woman, she is also a potential wife for all her husband's younger brothers, who can inherit her and are also called tinamu by her, and for the sons of her husband's sisters, be they older or younger than her husband.

601 582 Another feature of these early Australian forms of society is that all the persons belonging to a given generation call each other brothers (or sisters), and call the preceding generation fathers and mothers and the following generation sons indiscriminately. We may compare with this classificatory system the Thonga custom of calling all the father's wives and all the mother's sisters mothers; and all the father's brothers fathers. But this is not necessarily a trace of group marriage. As we have seen before, the meaning of kinship terms is very often extended to other people as a sign of respect or of love; the Thongas, nevertheless, know perfectly well the difference existing between the technical use of these terms and their wider connotation. There is something natural in these appellations. When we call such and such a person Father Morton, Mother Fuller, Brother James or Sister Agnes, no one would take this to be a relic of the group marriage phase! On this point my conclusion would therefore be: certain customs may be considered as traces of this old system, but it is not absolutely necessary to explain them by this hypothesis. The preference accorded to a wife's sisters, or nieces, may very well owe its origin to the following cause: when a group has ascertained that its women are well treated in another group, it welcomes new alliances with that group, thinking that, in this dreadful lottery of marriage, the guarantee given by a previous happy union is not to be despised!

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when a

Banyan takes a native wife (or rather a concubine), he can get her for £ 10, and the father consents to this lower price, first because a "white man's" wife is better treated and fed than ordinary native women, and secondly because the Banyan will soon go home, to India, and this kind of marriage is tacitly looked upon as temporary. The influx of money had also the following unexpect-

Cattle in the Nkomati River near Antioka.

ed effect on the native custom. There are two kinds of lobolo: 1) the lobolo which a boy obtains from his sister's marriage, and which he employs with the consent of the family to buy a wife for himself; this is the true old-fashioned way for him to contract a marriage; 2) the acquired lobolo won by a boy who has worked for it, and who has *started a herd for himself* (tisungulela ntlhambi). This second kind of lobolo became much easier to procure under

for. But the people who had given their daughter for that sum wanted to lobola a girl and were asked £ 30. Therefore they claimed £ 2 from the bakoh'waaa of Mpumi and these, in their turn, came to him asking for £ 2 more. And it was so arranged. This story fittingly illustrates the explanation of the lobolo which I set forth below: it is a compensation.

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583 606 586 578 the debt remains as a permanent cause of irritation. If there is no reason for friction on that point, the threat of quarrels ending in divorce is always impending like the sword of Damocles. If this takes place, the sad event will be made ten times more painful by the terrible dispute which will arise by reason of the lobola being claimed back. And the contending couple will not suffer alone. It may be that another marriage, that of the great mukoñwana, which was perhaps a happy one, will be destroyed in consequence of the divorce. (p. 243) "A ba ruli timbilwin," remarked Mboza. "They don't find peace in their hearts."

These complicated relations due to the lobola poison the whole of native life. Life should be easy for South African Natives. Their wants are few and they have enough to satisfy them under their invariably blue sky. They are generally speaking mild and good-natured. But the lobola question fills the African village with hatred and bitterness. *The milandju*, the debts! Milandju comes from landja, to follow, and this etymology is very instructive. A husband whose wife has gone away must *landja* his wife or rather his money. His whole family will help him in following this property until it has been recovered. Natives will go from one end of the country to the other to follow a few pounds, and at least three quarters of the cases which are brought before the Courts are lobola cases.

As regards the attitude to be adopted towards the Lobola custom, see Practical Conclusions. III.

F. POLYGAMY.

I. *Origin and spread of Polygamy amongst the Thongas.*

595 Polygamy is uniformly practised all through the tribe. This is not to say that every man has many wives; the automatic rule, by which the number of males is always about equivalent to

595 622 643 that of females and which has been recognised by physiology, has its effect also amongst Natives, and, in ordinary circumstances, women are not more numerous than men in Bantu tribes. Many men are monogamists, not from choice, but by force of circumstances. Others are wandering about in Johannesburg, or Kimberley, and marry later in life, whilst girls marry much earlier. In the villages round Lourenço Marques the headman often has two or three wives. Three is however an unusual number. The chiefs, of course, take more, and Mubvesha, for instance, the chief of Nondwane, had as many as thirty. In the Gaza country chiefs go even further, at least they used to do so in the good old times, under Gungunyane. Bingwane, the chief of the Ba-Tswa, had so many wives that he hardly knew them and at any rate did not know all his children.

595 What is the origin of the custom? It might be assumed to be a remnant of the old system of group marriage, supposing the Bantus to have also passed through that stage of family evolution. At one time all the men of a group would have considered as their wives all the women of another group, and vice versa. It was a state of polygamy and polyandry at the same time. The fear of the matlulana (page 265) put a stop to polyandry, and polygamy alone survived. Or it might be supposed that monogamy existed first and that polygamy appeared later, owing to the following reasons: 1) *Wars* diminished the number of men. As women were not anxious to remain "old maids," and as the tribe wanted to make the most of them, in order to increase and strengthen itself, the unmarried ones were taken by married men and so the polygamic family arose. In fact polygamy was very much fostered by the Gungunyane wars, during the historic 595 period. Every year the Ngoni chief planned expeditions against 567 his Ba-Chopi enemies on the coast, north of the mouth of the Limpopo. Men were killed and women enslaved, and each of these became the wife of her capturer. The position of these slaves was not very bad: however they were called *tinhloko*, heads, (a word which has the same meaning as heads of cattle), and could be sold by their owner. A great many of these Chopi women were bought in and round Lourenço Marques, before the suppression

567 of slavery. Hundreds of them still live there and are recognisable by their very broad, coarse features. 2) The *laws of succession* 595 which regulate the present agnatic Thonga family also lead to 336 polygamy as a necessary consequence. A young brother inherits the widow of his elder brother, be he married or not. If polygamy began in this second way, its increase in later times is not to be wondered at. It answers admirably to the Bantu ideal of life. As we saw, a man who has a harem, tshengwe (page 126), is a man who has succeeded in his career! This is the regular method of becoming a rich man, an ideal which is by no means confined to the black race! On the other hand sensuality develops very quickly in the polygamic family and its very development reacts on the custom and tends to foster it.

595 I do not think the origin of polygamy can be traced with 764 certitude. However, there are amongst the Thongas some striking customs, giving to the "first" or "great wife" a special position, which seem to confirm the hypothesis of a primitive monogamy. The first of these is the ritual incision made by the first wife in the inguinal region after the death of the husband; it is not performed by the other widows (p. 200). In the same way the widower carries out this rite only after the death of the first wife and not when "little wives" die. The second is to be found in the rites of the foundation of the village; as we shall see in the next chapter, the first wife has a special part to play in these significant ceremonies. When I asked Magingi, an old Rikatla heathen, why such a difference was made between the first wife and her co-wives, he told me: "The first is the true wife and the others are but thieves. That is why it is said at the death of the first wife: the house of the husband has been crushed (a tjhobekelwi hi yindlu ya kwe). When another dies, it is only said: he has lost a wife (a felwi hi nsati)"...

595 The species of sacredness which surrounds the first wife appears 643 even more plainly in the case of the marriages of chiefs. The principal wife of the chief is in one sense not the actual first wife, but the woman who has been bought with the money collected by his subjects and whose son will be the heir to the chieftainship (See Part III). Generally the "wife of the country" is not the first

595/643 in date. At her death the chief does not perform the incision : the first in date remains the first from the ritual point of view. All these facts show that, for the Thongas, there is a deeper, more mystical conception of matrimony than at first appears, when we consider their present polygamic family. For them, true, complete matrimony is the union of two persons, not of three or ten, and little wives are not much more than concubines. This feeling may very well be explained by the supposition that the race has passed through a previous monogamic phase.

II. *Consequences of polygamy.*

595 A happy consequence of the custom is that, in the primitive Bantu tribe, no disconsolate old maid is to be found. This is no doubt an advantage. I fear, however, that when monogamy sets in, this unblessed singleness will follow in its train.

But the evils of polygamy by far exceed its few advantages! 1) The first is the dreadful development of sexual passion which occurs amongst polygamists. White people who have lived in close touch with Natives in a head kraal where men have many wives, can bear testimony to the frightful excesses in which they indulge. See Annotatio 14, the observations of Dr. Liengme at Gungunyana's residence.

595/578/351 2) A second evil resulting from the custom is the domestic quarrelling which prevails in the villages of polygamists. There is a special term which indicates the peculiar jealousy of a wife towards her co-wives, *bukwele*. The prefix *bu*, in Bantu languages, designates abstract things, ideas, feelings. It is also an indication of place. *Bukwele* therefore also means the special spot between the court yards, where the wives of one man go to insult each other (rukutelana). The story of Leah and Rachel, in the book of Genesis, may give some idea of the reason of such quarrels!

595/578 Sometimes the husband amuses himself by fostering these by no means edifying feelings amongst his spouses. Tobane says : "He will say bad things (psitokoro) to one of his wives, his

1 [See pp. 519-520 in these categories of in 116-Analyst]

595 favourite, about another who is perhaps superior to her. He says
578 to her : 'You are much nicer than so and so! She is not like a woman (A nga twali lepsaku i wansati).' The favourite will make haste to report to her superior what she has heard. She will draw her attention to the fact that the husband calls at her hut more frequently than at the others... The superior becomes angry, and people say of the husband : 'A ni gudjulisana, a ni bandjisana,' 'he makes his wives hit each other.' He himself, after a time, will try to regain the goodwill of the despised one (a ta mu batela). She will violently repel him. He may even kill a chicken to bring about a reconciliation!" One can easily imagine the jealous scenes which occur in the village of a polygamist (1)!

595 3) Polygamy, when practised on a large scale, even brings about *the ruin of the family*. Two examples show this clearly. First the case of Bingwana, to which I have already alluded. He had a great number of wives and used to place them in his various villages, viz., in the capital itself and in all the districts of his kingdom, going round from place to place to visit them. But they were so numerous that he could not visit them Frequently enough and they committed adultery wholesale with the men of these villages. The result was that Bingwana had hundreds of children and that, in the end, he married his own daughters without knowing it. He died tragically. The Gungunyana's yimpis surrounded his fortress (hkokholo). His son, Sipenenyana, fled during the night and he remained alone. He then shut himself up in a hut where he had gathered together his treasures and his gunpowder, set fire to it and died amidst the flames.

The second example is that of Mubvesha who died on Nov. 5 th 1910, a man of weak character, whose intrigues caused the war of 1894-1896 and who was installed by the Portuguese as Chief of the Nondwana country at the close of that war. (See

533 (1) Here is a pretty little Nkuna song about bukwale. A despised wife sings :
595 Rirahara ra mina ri khale hi wanuna,
578 Wanuna a nyika dokori ya kwe !
My nice little pumpkin has been plucked by my husband !
My husband has given it to his favourite !
She sings this song to excite a quarrel... after which she hopes that she will obtain her rights.

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Appendix X.) He used to lobola the younger sisters of his wives (tinhlampsa) when they were still little girls, and had between thirty and fifty spouses. But he was terribly jealous, keeping them in their villages, away from all the world, under the supervision of a trustworthy induna. All the men were forbidden to cross the large road which separated this

Phot. A. Bovet.

Chief Mabveiha with some of his [redacted] (Nondwane 1908).

district from the rest of the country. The result is to be seen in the photograph taken in 1908, when I paid him a visit in his kraal. He was a man of sixty-five or seventy. His younger wives were over thirty; I saw *one* child only, called Nwadambu, after the surname of the Nondwane Portuguese Administrator. One child and thirty wives! This shows the result of polygamy when practised under such conditions. It ruins the family.

What is the opinion of Christianised and civilised Natives about Polygamy? I made an inquiry amongst the pupils of the Rikatla

595 Training Institution, asking them to set forth their views frankly on the subject. Most of them were full grown men, some were married, some had been polygamists themselves. I obtained about twenty written answers, and this is the summary of these little essays :

Reasons for :

595 538 1) A Native proverb says : Wansati muñwe a nga yaki muti, i. e. One woman does not build (constitute) a village. This proverb is confirmed by two others : Litiho liñwe a li nusi hobe, i. e. One finger does not bring the cooked grains of maize to the mouth ; and : One single arrow is not able to kill a snake (Ntumbana muñwe a wu psi koti ku dlaya nyoka).

595 2) To have many wives is the glory of the headman of a village. He is honoured in proportion to the number of his wives.

3) The polygamist can thus practise a generous hospitality, each wife bringing her plate of food for the evening meal.

4) If the first wife dies, he is not left alone.

5) If she is ill, he does not want for food.

6) There are many hands to perform the village duties : his many wives help each other.

7) The polygamist has many children.

8) No woman is left unmarried, which is a good thing, because how could the unmarried ones find money to buy their clothing ?

Reasons against :

1) Tshengwe dja kajata, i. e. Polygamy is troublesome... on account of bukwele, jealousy.

What is the source of this feeling ? A husband shows his preference for one of his wives, either by giving her a more valuable present than he gives the others, by visiting her on two consecutive nights in her hut, or, when he returns from a hunting trip, by giving her a better piece of meat, the leg, for instance. This arouses bukwele in the heart of the others, and, when this has once been the case, a trifle will suffice to kindle the fire anew. And how does this feeling manifest itself ? By mutual insults of these women to each other, going as far as accusations of witchcraft. (One of them will exclaim : "O! May my rival die and I remain alone in possession of everything!" This is almost equivalent to an act of witchcraft) ; by insults and menaces to the husband ; by the refusal on the part of the despised one to cook his food and to get in his harvest ; by deeds of violence against his person : (One of the wives of one of the witnesses went so far as to drag him out of the hut of her rival, and they made life so intolerable to him that he

595 fled from his village and went to Johannesburg to find rest) ; by criminal attempts on his life ; by hatred manifested to the children of the co-wives. (These children are called *makokonyo*, which is a term of contempt. They are taught to hate each other and to hate their father, as the angry mothers give vent to their grievances before them without 762 shame.) Finally bukwele sometimes ends in the suicide of the despised wife.

595 2) Polygamy encourages drunkenness on account of the great abundance of corn harvested and of beer brewed by so many hands.

3) It develops pride in the heart of the polygamist.

4) It is expensive, as the husband must pay £ 1, the hut tax, for each wife.

5) It destroys the man's strength owing to sexual excesses. (However this reason put forward by one of the witnesses seemed to have little weight in the eyes of the others. It rather made them laugh.)

On the attitude to be adopted towards Polygamy see Practical Conclusions IV. I shall there add some remarks about this interesting inquiry.

C. SOME FEATURES OF THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEM AMONGST OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBES.

000 The tribes that I have studied can be classified into two categories as regards their relationship system : those in which a man has the right of marrying the daughter of his wife's brother, and those in which it is his son who marries the girl, who is his cross-cousin, the daughter of his maternal uncle. This difference is absolute as regards marriage between cross-cousins. In the first category such a marriage is taboo and never happens unless the rite of *dlaya shilonga* is performed, an exception which confirms the rule. As regards marriage of the uncle with his wife's niece, it is prohibited in the second category, but may eventually take place, at least amongst the Pedis and Vendas, if the man has no son to marry the girl. This difference is deep enough to provide a principle of classification, as it has important consequences in the respective life of the two allied groups. However both customs are manifestations of the same general law existing in all the South African tribes, i. e. the right of a family which has taken a wife in another family to marry more wives belonging to the allied family.

air circulate, is the goats' kraal (19). It may be placed somewhere else, behind the huts, for instance; or sometimes goats are tethered every night by the leg to sticks round the hubo. The pigs are never kept on the hubo, but always behind the hut: they are newcomers in the Thonga village and have hardly yet won their "droit de cité." Let us salute, as we pass by, the tree (25) which is, as we shall see, the mystical stem of the village. We may perhaps see, hanging upon it, a piece of clothing offered to the gods, or at its base a broken pot which is the *gandjelo*, the altar of the village. The gandjelo is often placed, by preference, among the poles of the main entrance on the right. The village tree, which has a ritual significance, is not to be confounded with the trees of the hubo (26), which are but *mindjuti*, shade-trees, under which the inhabitants are fond of sitting.

So we reach the main hut which faces the gate. This is the dwelling of the headman. In hut 3 lives his second wife, in 4, his third and in 5 his fourth. 2 is called *shilubelo*. Great personages, men owning a large kraal, like to build such a hut, which is smaller than the ordinary ones and where no woman sleeps. It is the headman's own hut, where people *luba*, viz., pay their homage to him; a kind of office of the master of the village! He may sleep in it and summon his wives to come to him there. But he generally prefers to sleep in his wives' huts, one month in each, according to the polygamic custom.

Behind 4 and 10 is a *mbala*, a shed for the implements. It is built, like the goats' kraal, without plaster walls, and is smaller than a hut. There may be three or four of these in the village.

The headman and his wives occupy the back of the village. At the sides live his younger brothers, one, who has two wives, in 7 and 8, two others, those who have but one wife each, in 9 and in 10 respectively. In 11 lives a married son; in 12 it may be a nephew, son of the headman's sister, or a son-in-law; (see page 252). 13 might be the hut of a stranger (mulubeti), who has asked permission to stay with the headman of the village, as he wished to be under his protection. The case is not frequent, but may occur, and in order to be received into the mystic unity of the community, this man will have to "hlamba ndjaka" (See page 153), together with all the inhabitants of the kraal.

in the bandla, and it is strictly reserved for them. Women are allowed to penetrate into it only when they bring food. Boys must remove the ashes from the fireplace, not women. The *hubo*, on the contrary, is open to all. A shed is sometimes built on it to afford shelter during the rainy days. There are special acts always performed on the hubo : the cutting up (shindla), the slaughtering and butchery of animals and the feast of "eating the head." The head of any slaughtered ox belongs to the men, and they eat it together on the hubo (See letter C.). It is the business of the young men to keep the hubo clean, and they sometimes assemble to pull up the grass which may have grown on it. In former times it was taboo to come to the hubo with sandals. Sandals are used for hunting and must be taken off before entering the village.

Another place to which I have already alluded is the *bukwele*, the "place of jealousy," where angry co-wives insult each other! On our diagram it would be located between 5 and 4, for the wives of the headman.

The Thonga village, this closed circle of huts, is a living organism. All its members form a whole whose unity is remarkable. This common life never appears in a more striking form than at the evening meal. Let us look at our diagram. In every yard the mistress of the hut has cooked her mealies and her sauce in different pots, and, when the sun sets, she distributes the contents (phamela) in wooden or earthen plates. The largest is for the husband. He sits on the bandla with his companions, the other men of the village, and the youths waiting for the meal. All these plates, generally carried by small girls or boys, are brought from all sides to the men's gathering. All do not necessarily contain the ordinary mealies pap ; some are filled with manioc, some with sweet potatoes, etc. The men attack the first plate, all of them taking the food with their fingers. They pass on to the second and so on to the last. Meanwhile each mother has filled other smaller plates, one for the girls, one for the boys, one for herself. She has even sent to each of the other women of the village a little of her cooking, and the others have done the same to her ; so each member of the community, when

621 396 nature of that social unit, the Thonga *muti*. I shall give the sequence of these rites first in the Northern clans, according to the description of Viguet, and secondly amongst the Ba-Ronga, according to Mboza.

I. *In the Northern clans.*

621 787 784 1) The headman goes first to examine some spots where he would like to build. He *breaks small twigs* from various trees and brings them home.

833 2) The bones are consulted and help in *making a choice*. The twigs are placed on a mat one after the other. When the stone of the *kanye* (see Part VI) falls in a certain way in front of one of the twigs, this shows that the tree from which it has been broken is the one near which the hut of the headman must be built.

3) Building material is collected. When everything is ready to proceed to the construction of the huts, the headman goes with his principal wife to the spot chosen. They leave the old village for ever ; they must not return to it any more. In the evening they have *sexual relations* in the new place and in the morning they tie together some tufts of living grass. Next day all the people of the old village must come and step upon this grass. This rite is called to *tie the village* (boha muti).

621 595 784 834 4) Then begins the period, of about one month, called *buhlapfa*, time of moving, which has its laws. Two great taboos dominate it : 1) Sexual relations are absolutely prohibited. Should any one transgress this law, he has sinned gravely against the headman ; he has stolen the village (yiba muti). The headman will be ill, perhaps paralysed. The guilty woman will also be punished : she will not be able to bear children again ; she will be "tied by the village" (bohiwa hi muti). The culprits have "crossed the way of the master of the village" (tjemakanya). Strange to say, the headman himself is bound by this law. He must have no relations *with his younger wives*, because the village belongs to the principal spouse. Should such a transgression be discovered, the work

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of building will be stopped at once and the little community will find another place to which to move! Moreover the guilty woman will have to ask the principal wife for forgiveness. 2) A second great taboo is this : — No one must wash his body during the whole "buhlapfa", as this might cause the rain to fall and it would interfere with the building operations.

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5. The building of the huts begins immediately, each man making the circular wall first. When all the walls are ready,

Carrying a roof.

the *roofs are carried* from the old village to the new by all the men together. They lift each roof on to their shoulders, after having removed the old grass, and go out of the village, not by the main entrance, but by one of the back gates which has been widened for the purpose. A broad road has been prepared through the bush. They follow it, marching as fast as they can, and singing the obscene songs which are reserved for special occasions (see Part VI). In these they insult the women who accompany them, carrying the baskets, the mortars, the pestles. "The village is broken in pieces, so are the ordinary laws. The insults which are taboo are now allowed" (Mboza). This suspension of morality in speech is only allowed on the day when roofs are carried to the new village. Some days later, again, the women will take their revenge when they smear the floor of the huts ; then they too will sing their songs, insulting the men. But

621 831 all this is done in fun. It is a great day of rejoicing for the "tinamu", who tease each other as much as they like. A man may be wanting in respect even to his great mukoñwana on these days!

621 756 357 789 6) When the huts are ready, the *fence* is built. The family doctor is summoned. The medicine man throws leaves or stones treated with his drugs along the circular line, where the headman intends to place the branches which will form the future fence of the village. This being done, the men erect the fence.

7) Special precautions are taken for *the main entrance*. Poles are erected on both sides, but before they are put in place, the doctor pours medicine into the holes in the ground and also smears the poles with it at the bottom and at the top. Mankhelu used to bury a black stone, taken out of the river, at the gate. This stone had also been smeared with drugs. "In this way, I prevent enemies from entering. Those who come to try their charms against us (ku hi ringa hi maringo) will be attacked by disease and go and die in their houses."

783 834 621 8) The building is finished. Nothing remains to be done but to *ripen the village* (wupfisa muti). Men and women assemble in two separate groups and ask each other if they have been continent during the whole "buhlapfa". If one of them confesses to having sinned, he has stolen the village from the headman; the whole work is spoiled and must be recommenced elsewhere. If all the members of the community have behaved well, they proceed to a purifying ceremony exactly similar to the *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place during the mourning ceremonies. Each couple has sexual relations according to a fixed order of precedence, one every night, and they all go to trample on the spot where the women wash their hands. The principal wife is the last to perform these rites.

621 595 9) Then comes the *drawing to himself of the village by the headman* (kokotela muti). At dawn, after the night when she has had her ritual sexual relations with the headman, his principal wife takes his shield and his assagais and stands at the main entrance, everyone being present. Outside is a thorny branch prepared for the occasion. In her martial attire, she drags this branch to the entrance and closes it.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

621 595 782 10) Having closed the village in this way, she *performs a sacrifice*. She sips a mouthful of water from a tumbler, spitting out a portion of it (phahla) towards the people ; then she washes her hands, and throws a little of the water towards them in order *to give them* the village. This act is accompanied by the following words : "Be not tied by the village! Bring forth children ; live and be happy and get everything. You gods, see! I have no bitterness in my heart. It is pure. I was angry because my husband abandoned me, he said I was not his wife ; he loved his younger wives. Now, this is finished in my heart. We shall have friendly relations together..." The prayer being concluded, the headman goes to the main entrance, pushes the thorny branch aside, and opens the village.

621 574 11) The last act is the *khangula*, the *inauguration ceremony*. Beer is prepared, neighbours are invited and they all drink together, the neighbours coming *to see the new village* (ku bona muti).

As regards the old one, when the moving has been accomplished through the back door widened for the purpose, one of the inhabitants closes the main entrance with a branch. Hence comes the expression which is applied to a village all of whose inmates have died, and which has, on that account, disappeared : "Those people have all died and there was not even one left to close the gate."

II. *In the Ba-Ronga Clans.*

621 787 The sequence of rites for the removal of a village is very much the same as in the Northern clans.

824 765 1) The headman examines some spots and consults the bones : "Must I built at such and such a tree ?"

2) When the tree has been designated, he goes to it and places at its foot his furniture (nyundju) and his instrument of worship, his altar, (a pot, a jar, see Part VI). The altar may be placed at the main entrance later on, if the bones so order it. As already mentioned, there will be a mystic relation between him and that tree. He must never cut it down. If any of the branches should be

621 entrance and finishes his walk at the other, hanging upon it the
789 branch with which he has been sprinkling.

10) Then he sacrifices a hen. A young man accompanying
782 him cuts its throat ; the doctor plucks some feathers from the
756 neck, sacrifices in the ordinary way and invokes his gods : "You used to treat villages (daha miti) with these drugs and I do the same. I do not act of my own wisdom ; you have given it to me. Bless this place, etc." Then he plucks a feather from the hen's right wing, and suspends it at the main entrance or in the main hut, inside, over the door, according to the directions given by the bones. This is the *shirungulo* (see Part VI) and the act is called : "to tie the village" (tjimba muti).

621 Amongst the Rongas, there are some other *buhlapfa taboos*. It
372 is not allowable to light any fire in a village until it is completely
784 built. During the whole building period, cooking is done outside
789 the fence ; crushing mealies in the mortars and dancing are also
198 prohibited. Whistling (ku ba noti) is forbidden, as it might call the wizards inside the village before it has been protected by the charms.

621 If a man has many wives, he may build a second village for
595 himself and establish one of them there. A grown-up son, the son of the woman, will represent the headman in that village, but the law of "tying the village" will also be observed in this case. The headman will perform the act with this woman, and preside at the burning of the dried grass and of the medicinal pill, by which he *gives* the village to the inhabitants.

When a younger brother, or a son, leaves the headman and founds a village for himself (tihambela muti), he does it according to the same laws as those observed at the regular moving of a village.

III. *Some remarks on the rules of moving.*

621 Let us now analyse the two parallel sequences of rites which we have just described, and which complete each other. It is easy to discover amongst them three series of rites, social, protective and passage rites.

621 1) *Social rites.* The muti, as we have seen, is a little organised
596 community having its own laws, amongst which the most important
833 seems to be the law of hierarchy. The elder brother is the undisputed
768 master and no one can supersede him. He is the owner of the village. No one must "steal it" from him. Should any one do so, the whole community would suffer and no children would be born ; the life of the organism would be deeply affected. That is the reason why the headman must go first with his principal wife to have relations with her in the new village, and thus *take possession* of it or *tie* it. For this same reason, when the headman dies, the village *must* move. It is taboo to remain in it. Until the inheritance has been distributed, it is still *his home* (kwa kwe) ; but as soon as this ceremony has taken place, the villagers must go away, and close the door with a thorny branch. The part played by the
621 principal wife in all these ceremonies is most remarkable. It is
595 absolutely imperative that the headman should "tie the village" with her,
562 and not with another of his spouses. Should she be very old, the law
768 must be observed all the same ; should she be ill, and unable to have sexual
764 relations, the village simply cannot be moved. In the Northern clans we see her taking the shield and the assagai, closing the village and "giving it" to the inmates, even performing a sacrifice and praying to the gods. It is very rare to see a woman presiding at a public religious ceremony ; but she is the owner of the village as well as the headman. Moving is imperative when she dies as well as after the death of the headman. The main gate must also be closed and a new entrance made in the fence to be used during the year of mourning ; in the case of her death, this opening must be made on the left of the regular *mharana*, whilst, when the husband dies, it is made on the right side ; just as in the hut, when the corpse is removed for burial. (See page 138.)

351 2) *Protective rites.* These are those which concern the fence. This
789 fence does not afford material protection. The branches dry up very
621 soon and, in the case of a bush-fire, for instance, they would do more harm than good. It is a spiritual protection, a barrier of charms, of magic influences, to prevent the entrance of wizards and of all the hostile powers of the bush. We shall understand this better when treating of witchcraft superstitions. (Part VI.)

182 3) *Passage rites.* The reader will have been surprised to observe
621 amongst the ceremonies of the moving of villages, many features
829 which we have already met with in the circumcision school, or in the mourning customs. At first sight there seems to be no relation whatever between the moving of a village, the initiation of boys and the

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musical instinct. Some days later, another headman invites his neighbours to another beer-drinking, and so they eat and drink together (ba delana, ba nwelana) as long as there is plenty in the storehouses. When provisions become scarce, they begin to spare the mealies. But the advantage of the polygamist becomes apparent here; his storehouses are many and he can feast his friends for many months.

These beer-drinking customs are essentially demoralising; they

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Phot. A. Bérel.

Beer-drinking party in Maputju country.

are one of the curses of primitive Native life. But let me remark that, as the making of the beer takes nine days, these excesses cannot be very frequent, and the habit of drinking wine at the White man's store is ten times more harmful, as in this case alcohol is never lacking. We shall speak later on of alcoholism amongst Natives. (See Part IV.)

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Another pastime, very much appreciated by some, but not so general, is *hemp smoking* and the accompanying *saliva contest*. Hemp (mbange) has been cultivated for a considerable time amongst the Thongas, especially on the coast, not to make ropes, but for smoking.

643 857 However, specially appointed persons watch over him and report of his well being to his father. His youthful playmates are taught to respect him ; he is surrounded in his games by a miniature court, from which he chooses his favourites (tinxekwa) ; some of his companions act as counsellors and reprimand those who do not treat him with due respect. They play at court... also at soldiers ; the juvenile troop wage war with the wasps, and also with the boys of the adjoining villages.

643 787 777 751 782 When the child reaches boyhood, the bones are consulted, and sacrifices offered in order to ascertain from the gods whether it be well to take him to the capital. Should the answer be in the negative, there is nothing to do but wait. When the dice declare the propitious moment to have arrived, the transfer is effected and the boy taken to his father. This is a great occasion for the counsellors who have watched over the boy and who thenceforward supervise his education. They feast themselves well (ba fumisana), kill goats, perhaps even an ox, and offer a sacrifice to proclaim to the gods the return to the capital of the heir to the throne ; to his ankle is tied the astragalus of a slaughtered goat, as a protective amulet.

643 881 836 At puberty the boy undergoes, in the same manner as his companions, all the ceremonial rites usual at that period. The principal doctors of the country treat him, in order that henceforth he may be a man (ba mu yimisa a ba wanuna), having full right to enter into the sexual relations of gangisa (p. 97). Care is taken, however, to attach to his person comrades of riper age, who will prevent him giving way to excesses, (suka banhwanyana la' bakulu ba ta mu gema, ba mu sibela ku kula), which would arrest his growth and render him small and feeble. He thus lives in relative continence, participating in the play and in the work of boys of his own age, and looking after the herds. At times he gives a feast, when his father happens to have presented him with an ox with which to make merry.

643 588 595 Now we see him arrived at manhood, at the age when the Blacks take a wife. If his father is still living, the young man is not allowed to marry officially. He may certainly lobola, viz., contract regular marriage in the usual way, and possibly

643 588 595 some woman may come and live with him (titlhuba), as in cases of elopement — in which case he must go, according to the law, early in the morning to the parents of the girl and denounce himself as the abductor (p. 119) ; but none of these women can be his official wife ; they may bear him children, but these will be *makohlwa*, those who have no right to royalty ; the young chief may not wed his official wife, she who is to become the mother of the heir to the throne, until after the death of his father.

643 603 595 There is a saying, a precept of the royal code as follows : "Hosi a yi faneli ku bona ntukulu," a chief must never see his grandson, i. e. the one who will eventually succeed his son in the royal line. The Ba-Ngoni of Gungunyana (in Gaza) have the same custom ; but with them things are arranged differently. The eldest son of the chief's principal wife, when at the requisite age for marriage, takes a wife and loses the right of succession ; it is the youngest son, still young at the time of his father's death, who inherits the throne, because he has no children of his own. This leads to jealousy and civil war between brothers ; it has brought numberless misfortunes to the royal family of Gaza, and it was one of the causes of the downfall of Gungunyana. The Thonga custom is much more simple and less dangerous to the maintenance of peace ; the chief must not see his grandson, therefore his son will not be officially married until after his father's death. Any wives he may previously have taken will be morganatic and their children are not entitled to inherit.

I have been told by Mankhelu that when a chief lives to be very old and does not wish to delay the marriage of his son and heir, he can himself pay the lobolo and acquire, for his son, the official wife who will be considered as being "the wife of the country." But this seems to be an exceptional occurrence.

B. CORONATION OF THE CHIEF.

643 766 In all Thonga clans the death of a chief is kept secret for one year or more, as we shall see. Amongst the Nkunas the official mourning for the deceased takes place the same day as the coron-

643 584 595 in, of which the following is a resumé. One of the chief men of Matjolo commences by saying :

"It is quite right that you of Mpfumu have desired to renew today the old ties of relationship... Hamule your grandfather took his wife from Matjolo. Well! we are obliged to you. Nevertheless Sigaole has sent us to enquire how you intend to make payment for her ?"

— "We have thirty pounds sterling" reply the representatives of Mpfumo.

— "Ah! Thirty pounds ? That means that Mimalengane will have to chop her own wood and draw her own water ?" (That is to say: Thirty pounds suffice for the princess... but payment must also be made for two girls, the younger sisters (tinhlampsa), who must accompany her, to help her in the household duties, as is customary.)

— "We will ask Nwamantibyane what he has to say to this" continues the headman of Mpfumo.

— "How about those twenty oxen ?" says the chief to his representatives, when the matter is put before him. The envoy returns to the hut and announces : "There are also twenty oxen!"

— "It is well," say the men of Matjolo, "that will do for two girls to help in the work of the household."

643 584 261 Thus this delicate business is transacted without any great difficulty. The feasting then begins in earnest. All eat until they *shura*, that is until satiated, the stomach protruding in a gentle curve beneath the sternum, which is the black man's idea of a thoroughly satisfactory meal!

The betrothal being duly arranged, there still remain the betrothal visits to be paid and the wedding to be celebrated. Strange to say the chief, in these ceremonies, is conspicuous by his absence! His male friends alone go to see the betrothed, mainly with a view to reporting on her appearance, etc., to their royal master. Moreover when a chief is concerned, the betrothal visit of the suitor's friends is not returned by the girls, as in the case of ordinary mortals.

643 585 The marriage feast takes place, of course, at the bride's home. In Matjolo quantities of beer have been prepared, and the people

643 582 The reason why it is not taboo for a chief to marry a near relative is this, according to Mankhelu : "Nothing is taboo for him because he is the earth (hosi i misaba, a yi yili ntshumu). He may even take a girl from the houses of his younger brothers because everything is allowable for him. He has no sin. He is the one who makes the laws. Even if they are bad, people must accept them..." This identification of the chief with the earth is most curious and we shall speak of it again when treating of the sacred character of the chief.

643 595 The wife paid for by the money of the country, though on the one hand she is the official wife, is on the other hand inferior to the first wife married by the chief. He does not perform the rites of widowhood when she dies (See page 202).

A chief, when he travels, always takes his wives with him.

D. THE REIGN.

1. *The sacred character of the Chief.*

643 Let me say at once that, amongst the Ba-Ronga, the paraphernalia of royalty are reduced to a minimum. The chief is as scantily attired as are his subjects ; possibly his belt of tails may be more plentifully garnished with these appendages. His huts are built on the same lines as the others ; his village may be larger, but is sometimes smaller (1).

(1) One day when taking a walk on the hill of Rikatla, I came to a field where, in the shade of a magnificent tree, I found three individuals — the three most powerful personages of the country — modestly squatting on their haunches and scaring the sparrows from their plantation of sorghum. The trio consisted of Muzila, the young chief, his brother and Makhasi, his chief counsellor, who were devoting themselves to this tiresome occupation in the same way as the meanest of their subjects !

This same Muzila had several younger brothers, one of whom was engaged to look after our oxen, at a salary of ten shillings a month. One day the boy was ill. It happened to pour in torrents on that particular day, and whom should I see about ten o'clock in the morning, coming along absolutely drenched through and through, but the chief Muzila ! "I am looking after your oxen to day" said he "in place of my brother... Here I am, and I have just come to let you know that I am going to water them !"

789 of most people! This honey comes from below. It is a hidden,
823 a mysterious thing. A little of it is added to the drug and the
787 mixture is poured into a double horn, viz., two horns whose large
ends are firmly fixed to each other, the point where they meet being carefully covered with dung, which acts as glue. A hole has been made in the upper horn and the drug is introduced through this. It is a great means of divination. When war is imminent, the nyokwekulu begins to ferment, and exudes through the hole : "It knows all about war." So the country can prepare for it. No wonder that this powerful medicine is preserved with superstitious awe and the greatest care.

643 A place of honour is reserved for the magical horn in the
595 hut of the first wife of the chief. In the middle of the hearth
372 a perpetual fire burns ; it must never be allowed to go out ; it
824 is taboo. The wood used for it must be that of a tree found on the sea shore, and called ntjobori. The Makaneta sub-clan must furnish it regularly. It is taboo to take embers from this fireplace, which is called the royal fire, the medicinal fire (ndjilo wa buhosi, wa muri). Should the principal wife let the fire go out, then Godlela must be called on to light it again, rubbing together two sticks of a shrub called ntjopfa. The fire produced by burning this shrub is considered dangerous. It is taboo to cut its branches or to use them for the purpose of warming oneself ; the genitalia are said to swell when this law is transgressed (See Part IV). But Godlela does not fear ; has he not his drugs to protect himself ? He can and must use ntjopfa to re-light the nyokwekulu fire, and he will be given a good reward for his work! The ntjobori, in burning, produces an abundant smoke which leaves a deposit on the horn, on the forked branch and on all the calabashes containing the provision of powder.

643 The queen Mimpanyanhoba who was in charge of the
372 nyokwekulu had no sexual relations with the chief on that account.
595 I do not know if absolute continence is always enforced on the
784 keeper of the sacred fire, as was the case for the Roman Vestal Virgins. But I have been told by Mboza that this woman prevented her co-wives from coming near her hut ; it was taboo.

643 a bad chief. He did not even allow "bandla," viz, the gathering of men in the capital, because he was full of jealousy (mona). If he had not been placed in the chieftainship and supported by the White Government, he might have been deposed. Cases in which a chief has been deprived of his right and replaced by another man are not wanting (1). I have even heard of a chief in the Shiridja clan who was put to death. Deposal is generally proclaimed by a council of the royal family.

To reign over a Bantu clan requires much tact, ability and patience. The chief must be a father to his people and not a tyrant (2).

2) The system of government.

643 595 In order to keep in touch with his subjects, a chief generally places his wives in the various provinces of his little kingdom

(1) The annals of the Nkuna tribe provide an instance of the deposal not only of a certain chief but of the elder branch of the royal family, owing to an act which hurt the human feelings of the clan. We have already met with the name of Shithlelana, son of Nkuna, who lived at least 300 years ago. His principal wife was Nwahubyana. In his old age he was very ill and the woman, fearing lest he should die in her hut, drove him away; he was obliged to take refuge in the hut of another of his wives, Ñwantimba, mother of Rinono, and died there. Then the headmen assembled and said: "As Ñwahubyana has driven away her husband from her hut, she has also driven away the chieftainship from her son. He shall not reign. Rinono shall reign because he is the son of the woman who took care of the sick chief." This story, in which we see the sacred law of succession transgressed for a moral reason, is most interesting because it provides a good illustration of the conception of the clan regarding chieftainship, and proves that, even in ancient times, feelings of humanity could have more weight with the tribe than an article of the royal code.

643 524 (2) Two interesting Thonga riddles illustrate this disposition to criticise chiefs. The first riddle enigmatically describes the characteristics of an unworthy chief; it comes from the banks of the Limpopo:

Bupsa ga shisule. — Hosi leyi i ni mona...
Some cyclamen flour. — This chief is full of hatred...

The shisule — a word which I translate by cyclamen — is a plant which grows on the ant-hills, bearing large tubercles; these can be cooked and ground into flour; but if is only good in appearance, the taste is unpleasant and nauseating. This chief is bad! He is like that flour! Corruptio optimi pessima!

Here is another riddle which holds the chiefs up to ridicule rather wittily:

Timindji tibiri ti rendjeleka tchuka. — Tihosi tibiri ti hleba nandja.
Two mice chase one another round an ant-hill (They will never meet)
— Two chiefs malign a subject. (They also will never meet, i. e. agree.)

Each wants to have the last word and will therefore depreciate the arguments of his opponent. He will seek to disprove the statements of the other chief, making fresh ones which the latter will seek to refute in his turn!

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643 and pays them regular visits, staying some days in these secondary 545 capitals.

643 But a more effective way of holding the country is to place his son or his near relatives as sub-chiefs in all these districts. 631 If the son is still young, the chief will send along with him a 171 trustworthy counsellor to watch over him. Thus, when he dies, and when the elder son is called to the succession, the new chief will have his brothers as co-chiefs or sub-chiefs. Should they be ambitious, should they have acquired some power during the last years of their father's government, they may refuse to obey and proclaim themselves independent. This has happened many times amongst the Rongas. Let me shortly recapitulate the three instances already mentioned. In the Tembe kingdom Maputju, who "ate the foreleg," made himself king of the greater part of the territory. The separated brothers became fierce enemies and often fought against each other, all the more as Tembe greatly resented the revolt of Maputju, and Maputju knew he had not been fair to his elder brother (p. 329). The same thing happened when Matjolo became independent of Mpfumo, his elder brother ; both were sons of Nhlaruti. The origin of the war of 1894-1896 was the same ; Mubvesha, belonging to the Hlewana branch of the Mazwaya family, wished to become independent... even to take the chieftainship from the elder branch to which Maphunga and his successor Mahazule belonged.

So the Thonga clan has a tendency to fall to pieces, just like the Thonga village, and it requires a good deal of firmness and diplomacy on the part of a chief to keep his kingdom intact.

3) The law of succession.

643 Its main provision is this ; when a chief dies, his elder son is the regular heir, but all his younger brothers must reign before the son, the true heir, is crowned. This syste[illegible]ttempts to reconcile two principles which we have alre[illegible] met with as governing the family life : 1) the absolute preeminent right of the elder branch, 2) the community of property amongst brothers.

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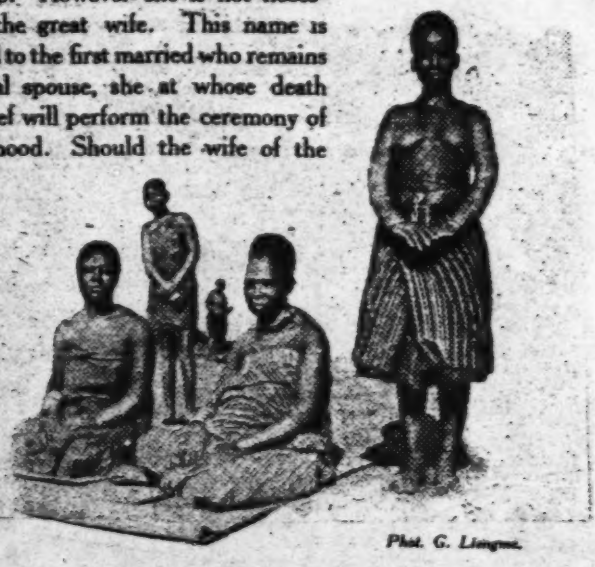
As regards the queens (tinkosikazi, a Zulu word), the chief's wives, there is not much to say about them. We have seen that one of them occupies a particularly honourable position, having been bought with the people's money and being "the wife of the country," she whose son will be the heir to the chieftainship. However she is not necessarily the great wife. This name is applied to the first married who remains the real spouse, she at whose death the chief will perform the ceremony of widowhood. Should the wife of the country die and should she not be the first married, he will not go through that rite on her account.



Phot. G. Liengme.

Ngoni Queens.

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Princesses are lobola with more money than ordinary girls. Except in this, they do not differ from them. It is not common for a woman to be called to the dignity of chieftainship amongst the Thongas; in this respect they differ from the Ba-Pedi, or Transvaal Ba-Sutho, who have had many illustrious reigning queens: Modjadji, Male etc. I only know one such case amongst the Rongas, and the queen was still living in 1912. Her name was Midambuze, daughter of Dambuze. Dambuze was the chief of a part of the Mabota country, northward of Lourenço Marques.

713 of palm leaves 5 in. and handle 35 ½ inches. As previously
711 mentioned, the handle of the large sized assagai is broken at the
595 warriors' death, being "he," or his defilement; but the blade
643 "never dies." It belongs to the chief, as does also the shield, and the son will inherit it. During the warrior's life, it is kept in the hut of his *first wife*. She is called the owner (nwinyi) of the assagai. It is taboo for the other wives to touch it; another fact which shows the special position of the first wife. (Comp. p. 284.)

713 Another weapon in more restricted use and which can also
411 be employed for cutting wood, is the *axe* or *hatchet*, of which I
439 have met with two descriptions (No. 3); the blade (mbimbi) may be narrow and elongated—it is then called shingwatane,—or broad and rounded,—when it is the shiyema. These hatchets are firmly inserted in their wooden handles like the axes of the lake-dwellers. European manufacturers now export a considerable number of semicircular hatchets, similar to the one on the right in my illustration, to Delagoa. The one here portrayed will be at once recognised as being of Native make. I may also mention the big *knives* (mikwa), a sort of sword; one sometimes meets brawny fellows walking along the paths, armed with these dangerous looking implements! However they are quite inoffensive.

713 I managed to obtain from a traveller a beautiful *dagger* which
411 he was carrying slung across his breast; it is a rare specimen
171 and comes, I am told, from the Ba-Ndjao tribe (No. 5). The sheath is made of two pieces of wood, artistically carved and fastened together with a plait of iron wire; it is slightly hollowed out to allow the blade to enter; this is firmly fixed in the handle through which it passes from end to end, coming out at the extremity, where it is bent back and thus held tightly in place. The Ba-Pedi in the Zoutpansberg also make similar knives.

714 Finally, when the warrior holds in one hand his large assagai,
171 in the other will be found his *shield* (shitlhangu) (No. 1), which he grasps by the stick around which this piece of defensive armour pivots. The Thonga shield is made like that of the Zulus, of a piece of ox-hide, oval in shape and of varying size, sometimes all of one colour and sometimes variegated. (The several battalions

587 the chief of our Mazwaya family, Magomanyama, says that no claim is accepted for a leper, for one drowned in the river, or for anyone who dies from smallpox or from the assagay."

692 177 Of course the Ngwetsas did not accept such an answer, but this is a typical Bantu affair (nandju), showing the many blessings of the lobola custom. The matter will have to be decided by the chief, or rather by the Portuguese Administrator, who must take a good deal of trouble, if he wishes to understand it rightly and to deliver an equitable judgment!

APPENDIX IX (See p. 530).

The story of Mboza and Muhambi and of the women inherited by them, illustrating the consequences of lobola and of its suppression.

177 Compare the genealogy of the Masuluke family (page 225).

595 583 Mboza had four brothers, three elder and a younger; Sam, the elder, had a son, Hlangabeza, who married by lobola a first wife and by abduction a second, Bukutje II. Fos, the second brother, married Bukutje I and had four children: three girls, Tshakaza, Estelle, Nhwaanin, and one boy, Muhambi. Sam and Fos both died, so Bukutje I was inherited by Mboza and her four children went to live in his village. In the meantime Mboza became a Christian, as also did Muhambi and the three girls. Wishing to lead a Christian life, he separated from Bukutje I, who, being still a heathen, committed herself with "an empty oil-tin" (p. 213), viz., a man of Inhambane who became her servant-husband. In 1904 a Christian young man, Moses, wooed the elder of the three girls and brought £ 20 to lobola her. This money was naturally due to Muhambi in order to allow him to lobola a wife for himself, and indeed Muhambi was betrothed to Ntshelebeti, daughter of Phulan Ngwetsa. This man was still a heathen and consequently wished his daughter to be paid for.

Having been told that it is not right for a Christian to accept lobolo money, Mboza and Muhambi, actuated by a most praiseworthy scruple, decided to return the money to Moses, and Muhambi started for Johannesburg in order to earn the lobolo due to Phulan. But this was not the end of this famous "bukosi!" The younger brother, Komatan, a consistent heathen, came to Mboza, very angry with him for his

[See pp. 504-509 -- Analyse]

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foolishness. "This is family property," said he, "and I do not consent to its being lost." So he claimed the £ 20, which was given to him, and out of which Mboza did not get a penny. Komatan himself did not intend to use it for his own benefit, as we shall see presently.

The following year, whilst Muhambi was still working in Johannesburg, Hlangabeza died. Muhambi was his heir, being his *makwabu*, first cousin on the paternal side. He was informed of his good luck, but answered that it was taboo for him (yila), as a Christian, to accept this inheritance. So Komatan took the first of Hlangabeza's wives, not as a wife, however, but because she had children and he wanted them to remain in the Masuluke family. The woman herself also took "an empty oil-tin," in the form of another Inhambane man. The second of Hlangabeza's wives, having been married by him by abduction, was not really the property of the Masulukes. But she had one child; so Komatan took the lobolo money of Moses and remitted it to Denisa, this woman's father, and, in this way, he secured the property of both mother and child to the Masulukes. The woman, however, went to live with a Chopi in an irregular manner and had a second child by him. On January 29th, 1909, this woman of the Denisa family came to Muhambi. Her child had to be weaned, which is done by means of a rite in which the husband must take part. She had no true husband, so she vented all her anger before Mboza and Muhambi saying: "I have no husband, nobody to give me clothing, to pay my hut-tax, to repair my house. Have you indeed forsaken me?" — "Yes" answered Muhambi, "you cannot be my wife. I have married Ntshelebeti and, for us Christians, it is not allowable to take many wives." — "Then do not be surprised if I go and take another husband, and do not go and accuse me *shikanekiswen*, before the Portuguese Administrator, saying I have spoilt your property." — "We shall not *follow* you," said Muhambi, "you are free." — "But" added Mboza, "we are not sending you to commit sin! Go and think the matter over."

This was the end of the discussion. Mboza's answer is no answer at all. It only shows the great complexity and difficulty of the position. The whole story fitly illustrates how utterly bad the custom of lobola is, and what immense difficulties its suppression entails. Let me, however, remark that these difficulties would not have arisen had there not been a heathen relative (Komatan) to uphold the claim which the Christians had foregone. During the stage of transition many hard cases such as this must unfortunately occur!

843 her own pudenda with a much befouled intimate garment which
834 she afterwards burns.
841 Going to the fire they both warm their head and their hands. Then the woman mixes the ashes she has collected with fat and smears it over her husband's limbs, rubbing along his fingers, his arms, and his legs, which is called lula. Afterwards, in the two nights following, they will have intercourse. If the husband has had sexual intercourse not with his wife but with some girl from another village from lustful desire he will be given a fossorium so that the rite lula will come to its completion.

765 "Annotatio octava (P. 155). Si mulieris parentes procul
783 habitant, maritus eius comes itineris erit, quacum superiore
833 nocte coibit, ad aquæ lustrali vim novam dandam."
842 [Note 8 (page 155). If the woman's parents live far away, her husband will be her companion on the way and he will have sexual intercourse with her the night before in order to give the lustral water new power.]

765 "Annotatio nona (P. 160). Faciebat dum 'Khunye khunye ;
535 quibus verbis significatur coitus (khunyeta)."
831 [Note 9 (page 160). She was saying Khunye, khunye during
834 this time; these words signify coitus (khunyeta).

"Annotatio decima (P. 160). Carminum, morum temporis marginalis natura eo obscenior est quo nobilior defunctus fuit. Viguetus narrat: [518] 'Duce vel uno ex principibus mortuo, luctuque consueto præterito, luctum privatum, ad quem boves immolentur, celebrari. Carnem ad baculos humi fixos alligari; homines inde mulierem vocare, eamque posteriorem vestem exuere juberi, neque ullam vestem nisi anteriorem habere quam, si velit, exuere ei liceat. Eam, postea, divaricaturam esse ad unam ex carnis particulis dentibus apprehendendam ita prominentem ut omnes viri eius pudenda videant, quod plerumque 'taboo' (id est nefas) sit.' "

[Note 10 (page 160). The nature of the songs, a custom of the marginal period, is the more obscene the greater the nobility of the deceased person was. Viguet relates: [518] "When the leader or one of the chiefs is dead and the usual mourning has passed, they stage a private mourning at which bulls are sacrificed. They tie the flesh to poles fixed in the ground; then the men call a woman and order her to take off the clothes on her back and they do not allow her to have any clothes on except the one in front which, if she wants to, she may also take off. Then she must seize one of the bits of meat with her teeth, bending forward in such a

765 fashion. The father and mother smear the infant's girdle
783 made of cotton flax with their genital juices so that the infant
833 becomes invigorated by their vital juices and thus may be
587 received into the life of the tribe.

These physiological conceptions, though they may be absolutely false from the scientific point of view, certainly proceed from deep intuitions regarding the mystery of life. I insist on the fact that they are not derived from religious ideas. It is a mistake to attempt to explain the whole life of the Bantus by their religion alone, as many writers are inclined to do. These sexual practices are not more religious than those prophylactic measures which we ourselves employ to preserve ourselves from tuberculosis or small pox. They are dictated by a special notion of contagion which is admittedly false, scientifically speaking.]

595 "Annotatio quarta decima (P. 285). Doctori G. Liengmei,
833 nostro medico, cum sæpe curaret viros qui medicinam
842 petebant qua infantes procrearent, fassi sunt se singulis noctibus cum tribus vel quatuor uxoribus coire. (A monogamis quibusdam audivimus uxorem adeo fatigari ut noctu exiret laboratum ut a marito evaderet.) Cum medicus eos hortaretur ut quinque dies concubitu omnino abstinerent, nunquam id concedere potuerunt. Volebant enim facultatem generandi recuperare libidine non omissa. Dicuntur etiam cum vires cupiditatibus nondum pares esse videantur, remedia quædam adhibere sive ut venerem excitent sive ut uxores prægnantes fiant. Duplex fit medicatio. Primum secti testiculi hirci—(quod animal fatigari negatur, mbuti a yi karali)—cum plurimis herbis mixti coquuntur et a viro eduntur. Deinde alias herbas collectas in cerevisiam injicit. Tantum aiunt esse effectum ut viro qui non amplius duas uxores habeat, non sit ea re [520] utendum, ne, illis non sufficientibus, cum aliorum uxoribus stuprum committat, quod ei sit offensioni.

Viri casti, ut in loco Mpfumo videre licet, in sua casa dormiunt et interdum uxorem quam cupiunt ad se vocant. Plerique tamen, lege sibi imposita, ne discordia inter uxores erumpat, mensem unum in casa singularum uxorum vicissim agunt.

Qui plures habent uxores aliis etiam medicamentis utuntur ad libidinem excitandam. Quorum unum putant ad effectum maxime valere: Medicus, cum se ipse curavit, in locum montium secedit, quo cynocephali feminæ urinam menstruali sanguine mixtam emittere solent. Quod manet in saxis et fœdissimam diffundit odorem, medicus excipiens coquit, et ex eo magnas conficit pillas quas emptoribus vendit. Hi eas-

595 in cerevisiam injiciunt.
833 Quod medicamentum ad gravia vulnera curanda quoque
842 conferunt, et liberis praebent cum caput ut cynocephali jactant."

[Note 14 (page 285). Doctor G. Liengmei, our physician, often took care of men who asked for medicine that would produce children. They confessed to him that they often slept with three or four wives in one single night. (From some monogamous men we heard that a wife would get so tired that she would go out at night to work just to escape from her husband.) When the doctor told them to abstain altogether from intercourse for five days they were never able to agree to that. For they wanted to regain their generative faculty without giving up their lust. They are said to employ certain remedies even when their powers no longer appear equal to their desires, either in order to excite their sexual desire or to make their wives pregnant. There is a two-fold remedy. First, a man cuts the testicles off a goat--(this animal does not tire, it is asserted, mbuti a yi karali)--and boils them mixed with numerous herbs; then he eats them. Next he collects other herbs and puts them into his beer. They claim that this has such an effect that the man who has no more than two wives should not use this remedy [520] lest, because his own would not be enough for him, he should commit fornication with the wives of others, which would be a grave offense on his part.

595 Virtuous men such as one can find in the village of Mpfumo sleep in their own houses and call for the wife whom they desire. Most of them have imposed upon themselves the law not to let any discord break out among their wives: therefore they spend one month in turn in the house of a particular wife.

595 Those who have several wives use still other remedies to
756 excite their sexual desire. Of these remedies they believe
833 one to be particularly effective: The medicine man, after
278 he has rested, retreats into the hills where the female baboons are wont to emit their urine mixed with the menstrual blood. That which remains on the rocks and which gives off an abominable smell the medicine man takes up and boils; from this he makes large pills that he sells to all buyers. The latter put them into their beer.

They also use this remedy to cure grave wounds, and they give it to their children when they shake their heads like baboons.]

800 Annotatio quinta decima (P. 477). Veretro fabricatur pulvis, cujus effectus mirabilis est. Qui, bellatorum carnis

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PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

I. ON THE RITES OF INFANCY (P. 36-61).

853 595 177 The rule that a mother "must plough for her child three hoes" is excellent. It is undoubtedly a splendid preparation for future life to have been fed during three years on mother's milk. Will it be possible to maintain this law under the new conditions of civilized life which are being adopted more and more throughout the tribes? Let us notice that this provision, though it was inspired partly in the interest of the child itself, is dictated mainly by a superstition concerning the lochia secretion, which is regarded as highly noxious and as keeping the mother in an unclean state for a long time. This superstition will not withstand the test of science and will pass away. On the other hand, polygamy was invented and flourishes partly on account of this law. A husband separated from the wife who is nursing a child wishes to have other women at his disposal. Polygamy is doomed to pass also. For both these reasons, it is to be feared that this healthy custom will not be maintained in the future. This is a pity, and we ought to do our best to encourage its continuance.

843 177 Many young married Natives leave their homes and go to Johannesburg to the mines for one or two years as soon as they see that their wife is pregnant. This is certainly on account of the above rule; but this desertion of the conjugal home is hardly to be approved.

164 751 177 As regards the whole medical treatment characteristic of this period, which is considered more or less as a disease, it has no value at all. The big intestinal worm is, of course, merely a product of Native imagination. The children sometimes suffer from lombrics, but not more than white children. Convulsions are frequent as a result of malaria and dysentery, and neither the ever present *milombyana* nor the